MODULE FOUR:

Navigating Information Disorder

3 HOURS
MODULE DURATION

CORE MODULE INFORMATION:

Module Type: Phase 2 – Understanding and responding to information disorder

Module Objective: Navigate information disorder to reduce its impact on digital communities

Module Dilemma: I do not know how to fact check or verify content.

Module Delivery: Physical training

WHAT IS NEEDED IN PREPARATION FOR THIS MODULE:

- Facilitators should review this Module in detail and customise the content to suit their participants, as needed (including adding case studies/examples relevant to your region or country).

- Facilitators should prepare notes for each activity. While this guide provides some discussion points and explanation as a base, further explanation at times will be needed (and participants may ask clarifying questions, so the facilitator should be well prepared).

- Review Content for Training Activities for a list of general training materials and module-specific activities (this link includes sample questions for Menti questions and Kahoot quizzes and information about how to make them). Note: Before the training, be sure to have these activities prepared.

MATERIALS

- Powerpoint slides (linked to sample PPT slides)
- Links to videos and MP4 files should be downloaded for backup (videos are embedded in PPT slides and linked below, per session).

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Session 1: Introduction to Fact-Checking

SESSION DURATION

65 MINS

Session Objective: Understand key fact-checking practices to identify misinformation and disinformation in social media groups

During the introduction, the facilitator provides a recap on Module 3, where participants learned about identifying the information disorder (and the many ways it is presented). This module will focus on navigating or responding to Information Disorder. Session 1 focuses on Fact-checking, Session 2 on Verification, and Session 3 on Flagging.

10 MINS

98-99

THE DILEMMA – A QUICK RATING

The trainers will begin the module by dissecting the module dilemma. The trainers will use a scale on Mentimeter and share the following dilemma: *Do you feel confident fact-checking or verifying content in your group?*

Participants will be asked to rate, on a scale of 1-5, themselves on this dilemma, with 1 being 'not confident at all' and 5 being 'very confident'.

Based on the results from Mentimeter, the trainers will get an average for the group of community stewards. The trainers can also ask a couple of participants what rating they gave themselves and why they picked that number. This activity will help us understand how relatable and relevant this dilemma is for the participants.

20 MINS

101+

FACT CHECKING – WHAT IS IT?

This session will go into fact-check checking practices to identify misinformation and disinformation.

The first thing the trainers will inform the participants on this matter is the fact that not everything everyone says can be fact-checked.

An important thing all digital community stewards should ask themselves while trying to fact-check a claim is whether it is verifiable (i.e."fact-checkable") or not.

To understand this, the trainers will help the participant distinguish between opinion, prediction, and fact.

- **Opinion** - An opinion is based on a belief or point of view. It is not based on evidence that can be checked and often displays a bias as it is based on someone's own experiences, world views, and belief systems. E.g "Pink is a better colour for girls than blue."
- **Prediction** - A prediction is a statement predicting or promising something that will happen in the future. E.g., "It will snow in March."
- **Fact** - A fact is backed up with evidence and can be checked or verified. E.g., "Spiders are arachnids, not insects."

FURTHER EXPLANATION / EXAMPLES:

- Thinking something is true because we agree with it, does not make it a fact (this is an opinion).
- Two people might be in the same room – one saying it is hot and the other that it is cold. These opinions cannot be fact-checked. What can be fact-checked, however, is the exact temperature in the room.
- Digital community stewards should only fact-check facts – not opinions or predictions.

OPTIONAL VIDEO AND DISCUSSION

106

To further help the participants understand this distinguishment, the trainers will play a short video explaining fact vs opinion, if time allows.

The trainers can ask the participants about the challenges in this distinction and reiterate the difference between the three before moving on to the next segment.

HOW DO YOU DECIDE WHAT TO FACT-CHECK?

107

It can be a difficult task to figure out what posts and what claims need to be fact-checked. This filtering and prioritisation depend entirely on the admin of the group – who sometimes might be guided and supported by the group members.

In this case, it is important for digital community stewards to focus on the following. Asking these questions can help admins decide whether a post should be fact-checked or not.

- Is the topic important?
- Is the claim framed as a statement of fact or opinion?
- Does the claim matter? What is the potential harm?
- Have I flagged content by this group member before?

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108+

FACT-CHECKING CHECKLIST

EXPLANATION:

Before discussing specific tools and resources, the trainers will discuss some general and key guidelines for identifying misinformation and disinformation. This discussion will be based on the following infographic.

Moreover, this will also provide the trainers with the opportunity to discuss terminology: that is, why do we prefer the term 'information disorder' over 'fake news'?

Several infographics have been developed, explaining to people how to spot fake news. We have adapted an infographic from International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (Source: IFLA) to explain some ways to fact-check:

- **Consider the source:** click away from the story to find the site and contact info
- Read beyond: headlines can be developed to be outrageous, creating "click bait" for more sharing. Read the entire article.
- **Check the author:** Quickly search the author, and ask: Are they credible or controversial? Are they real?
- **Supporting sources:** Click on the sources in the article, and ask: Does the information accurately support the story?
- **Check the date:** Is this old news? Reposting old news may not mean it is relevant to more current events.
- **Is it a joke?** If it is extremely difficult to believe, it might be satire. Look into the site and article to be sure.
- **Check your biases:** Could your own position on the subject or beliefs be affecting your judgement? Remember to take a step back and think critically about this before making judgements.
    - **Evaluate your emotions:** Misinformation and Disinformation is created to appeal to our emotions and instincts. Think about why this news is making you react in a certain way.
- **Ask the experts:** Ask a topic expert, or cross-check it with other trusted or official sources or a fact-checking site.

The trainers can show this video and emphasise the importance of the key factors discussed here.

111

DISCUSSION: THE IMPORTANCE OF LOCAL CONTEXT IN FACT-CHECKING

It is important to note that there is not a one size fits all solution or source for fact-checking. Community problems need to be assessed with community-specific knowledge. So while there is a range of digital tools around the world, there are country-specific fact-checking sites that may best- address your fact-checking concerns.

Trainers can **encourage participants to share additional examples from their local context.**

- A few important points for trainers to supplement the discussion:
- Understanding the culture, conditions, and history of a community or place is vital to understanding why people believe it and how to challenge or correct the information shared.
- In order to effectively combat misinformation, you have to make sure that those countering the misinformation are trusted in the community. And to understand

why misinformation takes different forms in different contexts.

- Example (Source: First Draft News): Africa Check (a fact-checking organisation) has found that conspiracy theories are particularly common in South Africa, something the organisation's chief editor puts down partly to racial and economic inequality exacerbating fears of elites and groups that are not part of a person's own "in-group." It is important to understand that South Africa has some of the highest inequality in the world, and access to the economy is "still very dependent" on race, which can be why Africa Check sees more conspiracy theories in South Africa than in other countries in Africa.

Trainers should remind participants to be aware there are also phishing/clickbait websites that claim to be "fact-checking" websites as well. We will get more into different verification tools in the next session in this module.

15 MINS **112+**

LETS TALK ABOUT BOTS

The trainers will explain the following indicators to the participants to help them to identify bots on their social media groups, without coding skills or machine learning algorithms, but through recognising different signals/factors.

Similar to how someone might fact-check information shared by a human online, steps can be taken to better understand the indicators to tell information is being automatically circulated online via Bots.

Bots are basically social media accounts that are operated entirely by computer programs and are designed to generate posts and/or engage with content on a particular platform. In disinformation campaigns, bots can be used to draw attention to misleading narratives, hijack platforms' trending lists, and create the illusion of public discussion and support. Researchers and technologists take different approaches to identifying bots, using algorithms or simpler rules based on the number of posts per day.

First Draft News created this infographic on spotting a bot (or not). The trainer should review the different indicators and explain that one of these indicators in isolation likely will not mean it is a bot. Rather, it is more likely that it is a bot if multiple indicators are happening at once.

For example, it is more likely it is a Bot if:
- There is a recent creation date, hashtag spamming, and it is posting a high volume of tweets in a day. (With just one of these criteria, it is unlikely to be a Bot).
- Or, if there is a suspicious handle, a high number of followers and no followers, and inflammatory memes are being posted. (With just one of these criteria, it is unlikely to be a Bot).

More information on the above indicators can be found here.

Trainers should make some space for discussion about bots, *asking the stewards about when they have encountered bots in their digital community stewardship work and how it impacted the group dynamics.*

> **Note:** Not all participants might have come across bots, especially those who manage smaller groups or even group chats. Therefore, unless the facilitator feels the content is relevant for the group, we would suggest giving a brief introduction to bots and their influence on information disorder and encourage the participants to read more in the participant booklet or do their own research.

Session 2: Verification

SESSION DURATION
60 MINS

Session Objective: Understand key fact-checking tools to verify the information we find on social media platforms.

This session will focus on verification (the process of establishing the truth, accuracy, or validity of something.)

The objective of this session is to: understand key fact-checking tools to verify the information we find on social media platforms) through written and visual information and tools.

30 MINS

117+

VERIFICATION: WRITTEN INFORMATION

Note for Facilitator: In this session, the trainers will share a few resources digital community stewards can use to verify and fact-check the information that is shared in their social media groups.

The trainers will give time and context to relevant topics/events for the participants to test and experiment with all of the above tools after each tool is explained and discussed with the participants. For example, the trainers will discuss relevant topics/ events for the participants to test and experiment with different verification platforms such as RevEye or Crowdtangle.

More time should be allowed for demonstrating the verification tools and for participants to practice the tools themselves during the second session. If you are short on time, participants can be divided into groups and be asked to do mini fact-checks.

The organisers may also invite a fact-checking expert or organisation to share local fact-checking tools that are more language specific. Additionally, trainers can encourage participants to share information about other country-specific fact-checking websites that may be useful to learn about.
In general, it is important for the facilitator to think about their target audience in preparing for this training, especially if the local language is not captured in some of the below tools (it would therefore be essential that the Facilitator does some extra work in preparation to customise this section to better fit the context and audience).

FACT CHECK EXPLORER – GOOGLE

This tool allows you to easily browse and search for fact checks. For example, you can search for a politician's statement, or for a topic. You can also restrict results to a specific publisher. You can search by keywords and see a list of matching claims and the corresponding fact checks. Keywords can be anything from specific topics to full politician quotes. Basically, anything you would also put into the regular Google Search bar.

By default, results will be restricted by your browser language. You can also see results from all languages using the dropdown.

The trainers will do a quick tutorial for the participants to show how Fact Check Explorer can be used to verify the authenticity of information and how this tool can be useful in navigating misinformation and disinformation that might be shared in social media groups.

BOOLEAN SEARCH QUERY

Smart searches cut through social media chatter by finding precise snippets of information based on keywords. When searching for newsworthy content online, you have to know exactly what you're looking for, and have the skills to find it. Using the right keywords to search in the right places is key. This is where Boolean search queries help. These strings of words allow you to cut through the usual social media chatter by upgrading a default search to a multifaceted, specific search to find more precise snippets of information.

Boolean search is used when you require stricter search criteria to eliminate generic results that are loosely connected to your brand or other keywords.

> **A quick note:** Twitter, Reddit and Google currently support Boolean searches, while YouTube supports them to some extent on top of its advanced search function. Facebook used to support Boolean searches, though it appears it no longer does.

Boolean searches help you to specify exactly what you are looking or not looking for. For example, let's say you're searching for posts during a breaking news event, such as the Notre Dame fire. You want to search for Notre Dame, but you won't want posts about the Disney film. A boolean search will allow you to include posts that mention "Notre Dame" but exclude ones about the Disney film to refine your search results and find the information you're after.

This is possible with 'operators', which allow you to combine multiple keywords. There are three operators for basic searches: AND, OR, and NOT.

AND – This allows you to narrow your search to only retrieve results that combine two or more terms. For example, you might want to search for "Notre Dame" and fire.

OR – This allows you to broaden your search to retrieve results connecting two or more similar terms. This can be good for misspellings and typos. In the case of Notre Dame, you could search for "Notre Dame" OR "Notre Dam". This will retrieve all results containing either phrase.

NOT – This allows you to exclude terms you don't want to appear in your search results. For example, you might want to exclude mentions of the Disney film The Hunchback of Notre Dame, so you could write "Notre Dame" NOT "hunchback".
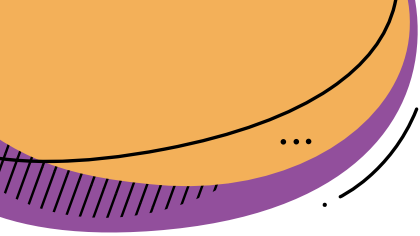
Key points:

- Operators (AND, OR, NOT) must be written in capitals, or they won't work
- If you're searching for phrases (terms made up of multiple words) then you have to put them in quotation marks (eg "Notre Dame")
- You won't be able to find information that has been made private by a user

The trainers can find more 'operators' for Boolean searches here.

CROWDTANGLE LIVE DISPLAYS ON COVID-19

This is a very specific and very useful resource to navigate information disorder regarding the COVID-19 pandemic.

CrowdTangle is a social analytics tool owned by Facebook. Their main portals require sign-up, but everyone can access their Public Live Displays. It's a quick, visual way to see how information on coronavirus is being spread on social media.

Public Live Displays are organised by region and country and show content from local media, regional World Health Organisation pages, government agencies, and local politicians, as well as social media discussion from Facebook, Instagram, and Reddit.

Each Public Live Display shows Covid-19 related posts in real-time, sorted by keyword, with public pages and accounts for each region.

The trainers will do a quick tutorial for the participants to show how CrowdTangle can be used to access social media discussions on coronavirus and how this information can be useful in navigating misinformation and disinformation that might be shared in social media groups.

The trainer should leave some time at the end of this session to allow for some more discussion and explanation. Participants can be asked: *"What tools have you used to verify written information online?"*

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30 MINS | 119

VERIFICATION: VISUAL INFORMATION

IMAGES

A picture is worth a thousand words, and when it comes to disinformation, it can also be worth a thousand lies. One of the most common types of misinformation is when genuine photographs or videos (that have not been edited) are used out of context to fit a new narrative.

Let's look at such an incident: In January, Facebook posts receiving thousands of shares featured the photograph (in the PPT to the left) and claimed the people in the photo were coronavirus victims in China. A quick look at the architecture shows that it looks very European, which might raise suspicion. If you take the image, run it through a reverse image search engine, and look for previous places it has been published, you will realize that the photo was originally posted in 2014. It was an image, originally published by Reuters, of an art project in Frankfurt, which saw people lying in the street in remembrance of the victims of a Nazi concentration camp.

But with a few clicks, you can verify these types of images when they are shared online and in messaging groups.

Just as you can "Google" facts and claims, you can ask a search engine to look for similar photos and even maps on the internet to check if they've been used before. This is called a 'reverse image search' and can be done with search engines like Google or Bing.

120 **REVEYE REVERSE IMAGE SEARCH**

This (chrome) extension allows performing an inverse image search by right-clicking on any image on a website.

You can configure the context menu to contain either a single button with your default search engine or a cascaded menu with all included search engines.

This extension allows us to perform a search by image. It even allows us to choose between the image search engines Google and Bing.

The trainers will do a quick tutorial on how to use the RevEye extension. This is a sample tutorial that shows you how to do a reverse image search using tools such as RevEye, TinEye and Google Images.

> **Note:** An activity we recommend here is to share an image (or few) with your participants and ask them to find out, for example, when the image was taken from or shared on the internet the first time, where it was taken from and in what context. This will help them to utilise the verification tools they learned in a practical sense.

121 **THUMBNAILS AND VIDEOS**

Whenever someone uploads a video to the internet, it creates a thumbnail, or screenshot, to show as a preview. We can manually change it, but most people don't. Just like you can use a reverse image search to find out if a photograph has been published on the internet before, you can use thumbnails to see if a video has been previously posted online. Using reverse image search, you can take several thumbnails from any video and check whether it's been posted on the Internet before.

InVID- The InVID project develops a video verification tool called WeVerify to detect emerging stories and assess the reliability of video content spread via social media. It is a plug-in toolkit designed to assist in fact-checking through video verification. The tool provides users with contextual information on videos, reverse image searching, video metadata, and video copyright information, along with other features to assist in verifying content.

The trainers will do a quick tutorial on how to use the InVID extension. A sample tutorial can be found here.

Note for Facilitator: If time permits, finish the session with this video, which looks at a case study on verifying a social media post.

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Session 3: Flagging

55 MINS
SESSION DURATION

Session Objective: Understand flagging and reporting practices on social media platforms

Trainers will introduce the session objective: to understand flagging and reporting practices on social media platforms through a tutorial.

30 MINS | 122

FLAGGING: A TUTORIAL

Note to Facilitator: The trainer can ask participants for a quick raising of hands to see which social media platforms are most commonly used. From there, the trainer can share two examples based on the resource below, walking through flagging and reporting practices on these platforms. The trainers should review this resource from WHO in advance of the session. Depending on how many platforms are discussed, the timing may change.

The overall module, as demonstrated in the previous sessions, focuses on navigating and identifying misinformation and disinformation through diverse digital tools.

TUTORIAL: HOW DO YOU FLAG CONTENT?

Once deciding which social media platforms to focus on, the trainers will do a quick tutorial and demonstration about how to report and flag content on social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, WhatsApp, YouTube, TikTok, Discord, LinkedIn, Viber, etc. The trainers will use this resource from WHO, and additional resources, to inform the participants about these learning practices.

15 MINS | 123

AN ACTIVITY

The trainers will *ask the participants to identify a post that spreads misinformation or disinformation (either in their group – or the overall social media platform) by utilising one of the tools discussed during the session.*

Once the post has been identified, the participants will practise flagging the content with the relevant social media platform. Trainers will encourage the participants to flag more than one post.

Trainers can mention to participants that an important aspect of flagging such content in social media groups is to ensure the members do not repeatedly post or spread such content. Therefore, an essential part of this process is to address this issue with the member who posted the misinformation or disinformation in the group. The trainers will tackle this in more detail in Module 5, which focuses on non-violent communication.

10 MINS | 124

MODULE 4 CLOSING ACTIVITIES

Next the Trainer will facilitate a Q&A session.

The module will end with a Pop Quiz on Kahoot (this is an optional activity, which is a great way to energise the participants at the end of the module).

Note: See Content for Training Activities for quiz content and instructions on how to make a Kahoot).

The PPT slide can be linked to the Kahoot quiz for ease of access and presentability.

Trainers can encourage participation by handing out chocolates to the pop quiz winners.

Finally, the Trainer will ask the participants to complete a short feedback form. This can be optional and created according to the organiser and facilitator's needs, therefore a sample is not shared.

The content of this module was adopted and inspired by the following resources:

- Understanding Information Disorder: An Online Course from First Draft
- Online Course on Misinformation and Disinformation: BBC Media Action
- Navigating Disinformation: An Online Course by UN Women
- Online Course on Journalism: 'Fake News' & Misinformation: UNESCO
- Remote Learning Course on Dealing with Disinformation Amidst the Infodemic: Out of The Box Media Literacy Initiative
- A Citizen's Guide to Information Disorder: CSU Political Science Capstone

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